

**Development of High Performing Academics:
The Importance of Leadership in Private Higher Education Institutions**

**Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali
President/Vice-Chancellor
Open University Malaysia**

Abstract

Since the enactment of the Private Higher Education Institutions Act in 1996, private higher education in Malaysia has progressed into a competitive and fast-paced field. Remaining relevant in such an environment calls for dynamism, attention to quality and producing concrete results, particularly from the academic perspective. The development of high performing academics in private higher education is vital because academic excellence provides a critical indicator of the success and quality of the institution, thus bearing an influence on how the institution is perceived by its clients and the public at large. This is also important as a way to enhance the institution's competitive advantage and thus, improve its brand as an education provider.

In private higher education, successfully developing high performing academics significantly hinges on academic leadership. Leadership influences various elements of the university, from its institutional values, to human resource practices, work culture and also its relationship to various stakeholders. Ensuring that academics can perform well will require a leadership approach that can promote a conducive environment for academics to grow and evolve, while at the same time, serve as a role model that adheres to the beliefs and values of the institution.

This presentation will discuss academic leadership as a means to develop high performing academics in private higher education institutions. This presentation will also explore the current private higher education scene in Malaysia and focus on the importance of high performing academics in achieving university excellence.